

A Critical Poem

We remember only for a certain time.
The neighborhood changes too swiftly
as we struggle to connect faces to our friends.

Always we receive a picture card from Paris
or Chicago or some newer house:
"Just getting resettled. Will write later."
And no letters ever come and names blot
with watery ink in address books.

Homes are changed yearly, streets turn and fret
like schoolboys hating to be pinned to one spot.
Everywhere there is a thunder of humans
churning and redecorating department stores.

Who can remember someone from last season
or last week? Whatever became of that man
who wanted to cut stone? Or that girl who danced
and disappeared into bohemian adolescence?
No one ever hears from that writer turned teacher
and saving his money wandered off into property.
What happened to that couple who designed furniture
until pregnancies became their only design
and kindergarten television their therapy?

Everyone is going away somewhere
to become a more successful American.
Everyone is getting resettled and will write
later. Everywhere people drop attachments and ideas
more than ten minutes old. They dissolve
into the convoluted hallucination of desperate
movement
and only decadent death arises fat from their
ruins.

— Leslie Woolf Hedley
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